

FUNERARY RITE AND RITUAL IN THE PODOLO-BUCOVINEAN GROUP IN THE LATE HALLSTATT

Mircea IGNAT

On the dominant heights that surround the Rădăuți Depression land researches identified numerous tumulary necropoleis, some of them being noticed in the archaeological literature since the end of the last century. No necropolis was systematically and fully researched. Excavations to a certain extent were made at Volovăț - Dealul Burlei and Cajvana - Codru. Most of the tumuli at Volovăț belong to the Early Hallstatt (Grănicești group), but, on the other hand, at Cajvana all excavated tumuli belong to the Late Hallstatt. Several tumuli at Satu Mare, excavated between 1893 - 1894, are dated in the same period. Therefore, in a relatively limited area we can identify three tumulary necropoleis of Late Hallstatt. The necropolis at Cajvana - Codru, having 50 tumuli located in the land (11 of them were excavated), is the most intensively researched.

The researches in the necropolis mentioned above revealed for the first time the existence in the Romanian territory of a new Late Hallstatt group, i.e., the one known so far in the literature as the West-Podolian group.

We do not intend to stress on the characteristic features of this cultural group, that were present in the mentioned necropoleis, but we want to make a brief description of the funerary rite and ritual. A confusing diversity faces us in this problem. Both the inhumation and the incineration are used.

The inhumation tombs are disposed in funerary halls (Cajvana - T 3) or in stone caskets (Cajvana - T 1), covered by the bed of earth of the tumuli, but we also found inhumation tombs in which such stone constructions are not present. Within the last ones the skeletons were not preserved, but the large number of such situations does not allow us to consider all of them as cenotaphs. We can mention a fighter's tomb (Cajvana - T 3), having a specific inventory (akinakes, a fight hatchet, arrows, etc.); there were besides two child skeletons (about 8 years), without inventory; perhaps a sign of human sacrifices.

About the incineration, it was used in all three necropoleis. As rituals we can remark the incineration on the place of the tumulus (Volovăț - T 5) or the disposing of the incinerated bones as a little cluster, having beside the funerary inventory. We also found incineration tombs in a secondary position (Volovăț - T 2 and Cajvana - T 1).

We can also remark the existence of several tombs dissimilar as concerning the inventory, i.e.: simple tombs, with an inventory containing ceramics and few jewels; fighters' tombs (Cajvana - T 3 and T 7, where we found an akinakes in each of them and a fight hatchet) and tombs that can be attested as belonging to the aristocracy (Volovăț - T 5 and Cajvana - T 6) with an extremely diverse inventory, containing both metal objects and ceramics, including wheel worked vessels.

The striking diversity of the funerary rituals raises interesting problems regarding the genesis of this cultural group and its new geographical extension, emphasized by the discovers of Bucovina. This is why the old name given by T. Sulimirski (who took into account only the discoveries in Western Podolia) must be changed. Thus, we propose the name of Podolo-Bucovinean group, stressing the regional manifestation that is specific to Hallstatt D. Age, placed in the north-eastern area of the Thracian-Dacian civilization.